DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 240 890 HE 016 879

TITLE	Regional Resource Sharing: A Strategy for Improving Western Higher Education in an Era of Limits.
INSTITUTION	Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Boulder, Colo.
PUB DATE	Sep 83
NOTE	27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (Seattle, WA, December 1982).
AVAILABLE FROM	Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, P.O. Drawer P, Boulder, CO 80302.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Agency Role; College Programs; *Cooperative Planning; Cooperative Programs; Educational Planning; Educational Supply; *Geographic Regions; Higher Education; *Intercollegiate Cooperation; *Regional Cooperation; Resource Allocation; *Shared Services; Student Exchange Programs
IDENTIFIERS	United States (West); *Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

ABSTRACT

The advantages of resource sharing in higher education are discussed, and the role of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) in facilitating cooperation is considered. A primary concern is to overcome the barriers of state boundaries to promote academic planning in the West. These issues are considered in a WICHE conference paper, commentaries from four panelists at the WICHE conference, and a summary of the major points made during a question and answer period. It is noted that regional cooperation can ensure that: not every state or every institution needs to be comprehensive in its higher education offerings; high-cost, low-demand programs are not duplicated; resources are allocated or reallocated more efficiently across the region, or among groupings of states; institutional resources are combined or coordinated to improve program effectiveness; and student access to uncommon programs is protected. Among the activities of WICHE are professional student exchange programs, cooperative manpower planning, and interstate program coordination. Additional topics include the nature of retrenchment, telecommunications, cooperative programming, and the role that WICHE might play with policy-makers. Commentaries are provided by William Richardson, William Boyd, Martha Butt, and Ann Mary Dussault. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

HE

ED240890

Regional Resource Sharing

A Strategy for Improving Western Higher Education in an Era of Limits

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

WICHE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- ✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

NE 016 479

WICHE

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

WICHE

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), created in 1953 by Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, assists these member states in working together to provide high quality, cost-effective higher education programs that meet the manpower needs of their citizens through interstate and interinstitutional cooperative mechanisms. WICHE's goals are:

- to improve access to higher education in the member states;
- to assist member states in preparing and maintaining an adequate supply of technically and professionally educated personnel;
- to assist member states in increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of their higher education programs and services and reducing unnecessary duplication.

Published September 1983
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
P.O. Drawer P
Boulder, Colorado 80302
An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer
Publication Number 2A124
Printed in the United States of America
36830559000400:1M:983:ART:ROB:2A124

Contents

Editor's Preface 5

Paper 7

Regional Resource Sharing: A Strategy for Improving Western Higher Education in an Era of Limits

Commentaries

William Richardson, Dean, Graduate School
University of Washington 15

William Boyd, President
The Johnson Foundation, Inc. 18

Martha Butt, Vice President
Northwest Area Foundation 21

Ann Mary Dussault, State Representative
Montana 23

Audience Discussion: A Summary 25

WICHE Commissioners 29

Editor's Preface

Resource sharing in higher education is one of the interests of WICHE's Committee on the Future. This committee's purpose is to consider the likely course of higher education and to examine the roles that WICHE might play in trying to carry out its mission of strengthening cooperation and fostering effectiveness and efficiency in higher education. A primary concern is to overcome the barriers of state boundaries to promote academic planning in the West.

The Committee on the Future requested WICHE staff to prepare a paper on resource sharing. The paper was presented in conjunction with a panel discussion on the topic at WICHE's Annual Meeting in December 1982 in Seattle, Wash.

This report presents the staff paper, followed by edited commentaries from the four panelists and a summary of the major points brought out during a question and answer period.

WICHE welcomes comments regarding resource sharing in higher education.

Regional Resource Sharing

A Strategy for Improving Western Higher Education In an Era of Limits

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) was brought into being at a time when the need for professional manpower outstripped the resources to meet those needs in certain western states and interstate cooperation was an imaginative approach to solve the problem.

Today the problem of balancing needs and resources is complicated by stringency. Dwindling state resources, federal redistribution of priorities and responsibilities, and growing competition for support dollars are placing tremendous pressures upon higher education in most states.

These pressures are increasing at a time when higher education is further challenged by rapid changes in the college-age population, academic interests of students, the relationships between higher education and the economic sector, and the technology available to provide instruction and communication.

Retrenchment is occurring, as anyone connected with higher education knows. In one after another of our western states, higher education budgets have been cut and cut again, faculty and staff have been laid off, and programs have been dropped.

Retrenchment is painful because of the suffering that occurs when jobs are lost. But equally important is the way in which retrenchment impedes progress towards the goals that we have—that our states have—for higher education: student access to institutions and programs; preservation and strengthening of quality; diversity of offerings within the higher education system; the capacity for innovation and progress.

The higher education goals of the western states are threatened by the same financial constraints felt by most states; their colleges and universities are confronted by the same challenges as colleges and universities across the country. Additionally, there are unique western challenges: vast, sparsely populated areas along with great urban concentrations; disparities among the states in terms of wealth, population, and higher education

development. There are also similarities among groups of our western states: in the Northwest, exaggerated economic downturn; in the Southwest, rapidly growing minority populations that will place burdens on the higher education system that it may not be prepared for. Some of these challenges create commonality of interests: for instance, between the Pacific and mountain states, as well as complementarity of resources, as between populous and nonpopulous states.

The challenge of retrenchment is judgment and selection. If resources simply shrink, without decisions as to how they can be reallocated from less important to more important tasks, the ability of higher education to meet the goals discussed above will surely be impaired. WICHE Commission Chairman Patrick Callan of California said in a 1981 WICHE conference on these issues: "We live in an era of limits. We may have to do fewer things; but the things we do we should do well. It means that often programmatic retrenchment is a better alternative than a general erosion."

In this new context, how can the concept of resource sharing (embodied in the Western Regional Education Compact) and WICHE help the states to more effectively and intelligently make the choices that confront them? Regional cooperation can help ensure that:

- not every state or every institution needs to be comprehensive in its higher education offerings;
- high-cost, low-demand programs are not duplicated;
- resources are allocated or reallocated more efficiently across the region, or among groupings of states;
- institutional resources are combined or coordinated to improve program effectiveness;
- student access to uncommon programs is protected.

Achieving those goals through cooperation is enormously difficult. It runs counter to the protective instincts and competitiveness among organizations of any kind. Incentives are thus necessary to persuade institutions and their leaders to cooperate.

There are other prerequisites to successful cooperation: legal authority, information and communication, time and timeliness, a locus for initiating action and sustaining it.

WICHE As Facilitator of Cooperation

WICHE helps to reduce many of the barriers and provide some of these prerequisites to cooperation by serving as a third party in the development of cooperative actions. While WICHE has no formal authority to direct cooperation, it does have a variety of tools to encourage it:

- It can collect and provide information that is useful in the planning process.
- It has channels of communication with all the actors needed to bring about a cooperative agreement.

- It has legitimacy with the state governments, and in many cases specific legislation within the states that recognize WICHE as an agency for facilitating resource sharing.
- It has a specific geographic territory—the thirteen western states.

WICHE'S central mission of facilitating cooperation has been fulfilled through two approaches: (1) developing specific cooperative mechanisms among states and institution and (2) serving as the focal point for coordinated regional higher education planning. The organization's activities in both these roles are briefly described below.

Professional Student Exchange Program. In pledging their cooperation through an interstate compact, the western states acknowledged their responsibilities to provice access for their citizens to professional education and to maintain adequate numbers of practitioners, especially in the health professions. Toward these ends, WICHE established its backbone of its cooperative student exchange mechanisms. It now includes sixteen exchange fields and in 1982-83 involved 1,409 exchange students and $11.5 million in support fee payments.

Special Subregional Mechanisms. Two subregional arrangements supplement the regular PSEP in the field of veterinary medicine. In one, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho share a veterinary medicine curriculum taught in all three states. In the other, eight states send veterinary medicine students to Colorado State University under a cost-sharing arrangement. WICHE is involved in both programs as fiscal administrator and coordinator of a review and recommendation process involving the affected states.

Another special subregional program, developed apart from WICHE, involves the education and training of physicians in the states of Washington, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WAMI Program).

WICHE also is involved in administering or coordinating several other subregional exchange arrangements at levels other than professional education. These include community college students from Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming; mineral engineering students from those three states plus Alaska, Arizona, Nevada, and New Mexico; students at all levels enrolled in fields of study not available in their home state; and graduate-level students seeking education in highly specialized fields in five Northwest states (see below).

Cooperative Manpower Planning. Regional examination of professional and graduate-level education capacities and needs is among the responsibilities set out in the WICHE compact. WICHE recently completed a study of dental education and manpower with the objective of developing a regionwide approach to meeting the changing dental manpower needs of the region in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

WICHE also is spearheading an effort to bring higher education, government, and the business sector together to devise comprehensive strategies

to deal with manpower issues in rapidly developing high-technology and energy-related industries.

Interstate Program Coordination. WICHE's Graduate Education Project has stimulated joint planning among five Northwest states since 1977. This cooperative planning has led to the designation of forty graduate programs at sixteen Northwest institutions as open to residents of those states at greatly reduced tuition plus preference in admission. This effort is being expanded to five more western states; students will enroll in the new programs in academic year 1984-85.

Future Opportunities For Resource Sharing

In hard times, cooperation offers the opportunity to achieve efficiency as decisions about reallocation of resources are required within higher education. Higher education leaders should examine the benefits of cooperative, coordinated approaches to these decisions. The aim should be to maximize resources while preventing a loss of quality, unacceptable narrowing of program offerings, or inequitable strictures on access.

As the established and legally authorized organization to foster cooperation among western states in higher education, WICHE is in a position to respond to new opportunities that arise from changes in the environment. WICHE commissioners, representing each of the thirteen member states, have laid the groundwork for future directions of the organization by establishing its priorities: to continue and expand student exchange mechanisms, to increase information-sharing activities, and to emphasize studies of professional and technical manpower needs.

Future opportunities for cooperation among institutions and states probably will look much like those WICHE has helped to bring about in the past.

Expansion of Exchange Programs. Recent commission action has paved the way for WICHE to facilitate greater resource sharing at two- and four-year college levels, as well as to adapt professional student exchanges to the needs of a changed environment in higher education. In 1978, a joint gubernatorial-legislative committee accepted a broad "post-secondary education" definition of WICHE's scope that recognized a role for WICHE at undergraduate levels. In 1981, the WICHE Commission directed staff to conduct a field-by-field examination of the PSEP, including consideration of adapting arrangements as warranted.

The commission also approved possible model legislation to enable states to enter into targeted resource sharing, especially through reciprocal tuition waivers, and instructed staff to engage in fact finding and analysis related to such targeted sharing at both the community college and four-year levels. There has been an increase among western states in the development of reciprocal waivers of out-of-state tuition for limited numbers of students from nearby states.

The time may be ripe for more vigorous efforts to use reciprocal tuition waivers to foster increased resource sharing to broaden access to specific fields across state lines. This can be seen as a regional planning mechanism that allows states and institutions to broaden or preserve access and conserve resources.

A logical next step for WICHE might be to develop exchanges across a broad range of undergraduate programs as is already done in the New England states under a similar interstate compact.

Large-Scale Cooperative Projects. Cooperation is an obvious response to needs created by rapid growth in fields where "start-up" costs are formidable in fields where there is a limited, somewhat definable potential enrollment (such as a set class size for instructional purposes); a need for a major research or service facility; a requirement for extensive advance planning and design; and clear benefits to participating states. Future needs in the West could follow either of two patterns: (1) existing programs or facilities where demand is *decreasing*, suggesting the need to regionalize to stretch resources and preserve quality of programs (e.g. dentistry, pharmacy); or (2) fields in which rapidly *increasing* demand justifies regionalization to serve a broad public demand (e.g., high-technology fields, telecommunications).

Regional Cooperation between Higher Education and Service Providers. There are numerous approaches to improving links between higher education and the sectors of the economy that it serves by producing professional or technical manpower research support. WICHE has cooperatively explored many of these links in the past through its own programs such as Nursing and Mental Health and Human Services. Growing recognition of the explicit role of higher education in economic development suggests that these links will be strengthened, with resulting benefits as well as costs. Because of the value of model programs and "transfer of technology" much of this work should be done cooperatively and on a regional basis.

Regional Planning. Regional planning, involving large-scale allocation or reallocation of resources across a region, is uncommon in American higher education. There are occasions, however, when conditions are appropriate to consider the regional perspective when making decisions about programs, institutional missions, establishing expensive facilities, and so forth. This is particularly true in times when funding is scarce, human resources to accomplish a function are limited, and where mutual interests create a generally receptive climate.

Information Sharing. The sharing of information--regionwide data collection, elaboration of issues, policy analysis—is instrumental in identifying and stimulating cooperative possibilities. Over the past several years, WICHE has been trying to strengthen its capacity in this area through the development and expansion of its Information Clearinghouse. That capac-

ity is critical to the future expansion of cooperative efforts, especially those in regional planning and large-scale cooperative efforts.

Conclusion

The current demographic patterns, decreasing demand, and increasing destructive competition are likely to be with us for a decade. No one foresees increased financial support from any of the usual sources, except tuition (where increases will not offset the limitations in governmental support). Of course, these factors will vary by state.

Resource sharing is not a comprehensive solution to these challenges. But it does promise important improvements at the margin—in both the effectiveness and the efficiency—of the system.

This paper was intended to show that resource sharing in higher education—always a useful option in increasing quality and effectiveness—is a sensible approach to easing those challenges.

Commentaries

Commentaries

William Richardson
Dean, Graduate School
University of Washington

I would like to assume in my remarks that we have an economic recovery and that things are fairly stable, as stable as the world can be these days. That is, I don't want to color the talk too much by the experience of the last year or two, of great fiscal crisis at the state level and for our institutions. Rather, I'd like to assume we have recovery, a reasonable level of funding, and some stability over the coming decade. I think that despite such stability we still will face program retrenchment. In most instances, universities will find it necessary and appropriate continually to review and sometimes to reduce or eliminate programs. We are going to be dealing in many institutions with reallocation, the opposite side of the coin of investment in new fields (with expensive facilities), which can be the motivation for regional cooperation and planning.

The Nature of Retrenchment

As we reduce not across-the-board but programmatically for reallocation, we need to be attentive to what's going on in other parts of the state and across state boundaries. We're going to be in this mode for many years because of the nature of the costs in higher education. We have moved beyond the point of concerning ourselves with discretionary shifts in expenditure—to address issues either of quality or access—into a situation where any cost increases are by and large mandatory; many of them have to do with simply staying in business. Secondly, and very importantly, these cost increases are related to maintenance of solid academic programs; that is, these expenditures that are no longer discretionary but really are mandatory to preserve academic programs. So, my argument is that even if we have an economic recovery, the amount of money needed to maintain our position in terms of quality will require very substantial increases. It is as a consequence of this sort of analysis that we came to the conclusion at the University of Washington that we needed to reduce programs.

We are in the process of reviewing for elimination over two dozen degree programs and some whole departments and other academic units. Particularly noteworthy in what we're doing, I think, is that more than ever we are taking very seriously the questions: What is the role and mission of the university? What is being done elsewhere in the state? What other

programs or universities offer this field of study? What are those programs like? At what level are they offered? What is their quality? In other words, what are our options as we look across not only Washington but other states, with respect to what we must offer and what we should offer? What's very evident from this exercise is that the numbers of fields and programs and levels and types of instructions are enormous—so substantial that it's difficult to comprehend all that's going on in the Northwest and other western states.

Obstacles to Cooperation

There are obviously a great many obstacles to regional coordination. The larger ones are things like territoriality, institutional imperatives, competitiveness, and all of those things that you expect to observe in any institution of higher education or any other sector. But I'd like to assume for purposes of this discussion that those obstacles don't exist and that our institutions are highly motivated to collaborate with one another, want to coordinate at the regional level, and want to share resources.

Setting aside the grand obstacles of competitiveness and territoriality, there are several others of a more modest dimension that I think can be overcome but need to be recognized.

The first obstacle is the magnitude of the task. We have a vast array of programs and fields, and they differ in their character across states. We need accurate information. We need it for institutional planning so that, for example, at the University of Washington faculty and administrators can look across programs and try to judge which ones should be reduced, which eliminated, which strengthened. We need enough information to be persuasive with constituents in order to say a program can be done elsewhere in a manner that is entirely satisfactory for the citizens of the state. One needs information so as to be fairly confident and persuasive that there is an alternative, and it is a viable option. This is difficult because, almost by definition, each program has placed a great deal of emphasis on product differentiation. So as soon as we start thinking about substituting one program for another, the one that is about to be eliminated is immediately going to call attention not to the advantages of the other, but to its shortcomings.

The second and perhaps less obvious difficulty is the phenomenon of the natural histories of programs and the fact that they're going to be out of synchronization. You may have a program at one university that is quite comparable to one at another and in which there could be resource sharing; but in the natural history of one, a new chairman has just been recruited; or it has just completed an expensive renovation project and moved into

new laboratories; or it has just lost a distinguished scholar, is in the process of rebuilding, and has raised $100,000 from the community to fund a departmental support budget.

A third obstacle is the centrality issue, which is particularly applicable to nonprofessional programs. Consider the disciplines where very expensive doctoral programs, for example, play a key role within a department. For the sake of discussion, take physics, a discipline which is present on most campuses and one which the university and, certainly, the physics faculty want to be as good as possible. If there is a doctoral program, it is serving an important internal function in attracting first-rate graduate students and retaining or attracting first-class faculty. This, in turn, has a favorable influence on scholarship within the department generally and on the undergraduate program in particular. Even if the program may be getting smaller—as most are—may be getting weaker, and continues to be very expensive, it's difficult to give up an advanced degree in a central program such as physics. The question then becomes, at what point does it make sense to drop a program because the costs in some sense exceed the benefits that accrue to the faculty and students? The answer is influenced by the changing roles and missions of the universities. One has to look at institutional goals and how they relate to a particular discipline or area of study.

Another obstacle is timing. We all go through planning processes and budget analyses, reductions, or requests for expansion at different times. The crisis that comes is not going to be coordinated conveniently across institutions. While we at the University of Washington might be looking to see what's available in fields X, Y, or Z, it may be a year later or earlier than Oregon asked or will consider the question, and three years after Montana or Idaho or Alaska has already done something about it.

Lastly, it seems to me, there are obstacles to sharing institutional knowledge about process, the legal impediments, and political difficulties. There is no easy way to share that information across states unless there is some mechanism in place.

Brokering and Changing the Ethic

These remarks are intended to make the point that beyond the grand ones, there are some practical obstacles with which to deal. An important consideration for WICHE would be how to assist institutions—assuming that the good will and intent is there—to overcome some of these practical obstacles. I think a key would be a brokering role, because much of what I've pointed to can be overcome, or at least greatly eased, by having a broker operating within the region. A broker is needed who would understand the complexities of higher education and of what is essentially a

market; would understand the flows and natural histories of programs across a fairly broad regional area; would have a feel for the timing of what's happening to different institutions and could share that with other institutions; would be a neutral, trusted entity, person, or organization that could share information and identify opportunities in a relatively non-threatening way. And lastly, as part of the broker role, we need an agency whose concern it would be to worry about the health of the market across the states, and whether or not there are legal, political, or other impediments that need to be addressed by legislatures or higher education bodies.

Finally, I suggest it would help if we could change the ethic, or if an agency could assist us in changing the ethic, in such a way that regional sharing and coordination became the normal thing to do instead of an abnormal thing to do. My perception is that right now anyone who seriously engages in such activity, particularly if it means giving up programs, departments, or fields of study in the university, is viewed not as one who is pioneering a new approach to resource allocation but as simply a traitor who is not doing his job because he is not looking out for the best interest of all existing programs at his institution. Changing the ethic so that resource sharing and coordination become normal instead of suspect would be very helpful.

William Boyd
President
The Johnson Foundation, Inc.

My discipline is history, specifically diplomatic history, and I want to approach the problem of resource sharing and cooperation by drawing an analogue from international relations. From that perspective, one would have to say the prospects for cooperation are not good, but that the need for an organization like WICHE is urgent. We are accustomed to the international arena in which every nation-state sees itself as sovereign and recognizes no law higher than itself and no interest higher than its self-interest. Autonomy is the most important thing. This is not something that only the great powers feel. No nation is so poor or so mean that it does not adopt that same posture. International anarchy is the result. If only nations cooperated instead of competing, many of the problems that rack us would go away. And so it is in higher education. The institutions tend to be sovereign or at least to cherish the illusion of sovereignty. Even the mean, poor ones are that way. The result is that we have problems that go unsolved for lack of a willingness to share or to cooperate.

Other Analogues to Consider

There are other analogues possible. One is the free market system. We believe in a free market economy in which planning and regulation are anathema. Planned economies are regarded as the hallmark of socialism. To some degree, the collegiate world is the world of the free market economy.

Another analogue is with the world of nature, where in the natural state of things there is a food chain. Bigger things are constantly eating littler things until you get to the point where teeny things are eating teeny-weeny things. And so it goes. Or in terms of Darwinism, through some sort of natural selection we have the survival of the fittest. And that's what we would come to in the end if we let this process go unchecked. Fred Crossland, who until recently was chief program officer in education for the Ford Foundation, said what we are apt to get in higher education by letting it run on its present course is the survival of the slickest.

In any event, you can draw from your own disciplines analogues to the situation of higher education today. But using mine of the particularistic world of autonomous institutions as analogous to the nation-states, I would suggest that WICHE must be an analogue to the United Nations. Saying that is both the good news and the bad news. I consider the comparison apt; WICHE has not ushered in a new era. It certainly has mitigated or ameliorated some of the problems that would otherwise have been much more devastating, however. It has been a countervailing force, helping to hold in check some of the aggrandizing instincts of collegiate institutions, which are by their nature expansionist, adding programs on the borders. Universities mimic the farmer who says, "I don't need much more land, only that which adjoins mine."

A Need for Planning

Obviously, the need for a successful U.N. is more urgent than ever, because the academic equivalent of war threatens to get worse. The demographic prospect of a 29 percent decline in the size of the college-age cohort within a decade threatens to heat up the competition and illustrates the problem itself. Demographic changes give early warning signals because the time between birth and matriculation is long; people can be counted in advance and accommodated. But do we do it? No. We were inadequately prepared for the expansion, and now many institutions are still not planning for the decline. I live and work in a region—the Northeast quadrant—where the loss of students is going to be particularly great, about 35 percent. Yet when a major foundation sent scouts out to discover who was planning

what—and this only twenty-four months ago—they found that almost no one was planning for anything, that every institution had a particular reason for believing it was going to be largely immune from decline. Foreign students or some quirk of migration or an influx of older adults is expected to compensate for losses of traditional students. (Every older adult would have to be taking thirty credit hours to meet the plans of collegiate institutions.) Fantasizing was substituting for planning. One of the greatest services that WICHE could perform for the future would be to provide a good model for institutional planning.

Some years ago, when the problem was expansion rather than regression, Sidney G. Tickton prepared a model for planning. It was narrowly focused on the budget itself, but it showed college leaders how to do a ten-year budget projection and then what one could derive from that in terms of program growth and faculty development. It was enormously helpful to a generation of university administrators. I wish that now we had some equivalent of the Tickton model for planning. Even though institutions would still need to do some of their planning in an idiosyncratic manner, it would be very useful if there were a model against which things could be tested. That might, in fact, be one of the greatest contributions that WICHE could make.

If we just follow market forces, one result would be the loss of a lot of institutions. In the profit sector we occasionally save an institution (Lockheed, Chrysler were saved), but those are exceptions to the national policy. Higher education is quite different. Public policy has been to try to save collegiate institutions at all costs. There are many reasons for that; some of the good reasons are that the diversity is needed and that the institutions provide opportunities for students. Despite our pretensions to mobility, most people go to school very close to where they live. Many people are not going to go to school at all if they can't go to school in their home town. Consequently, the opportunity factor is a very important one which has to weigh in this balance when we talk about redundancy and overlapping. It's very complex.

Dealing With Telecommunications

Another helpful thing that WICHE might do would be to try to get out in front of the institutions in the matter of telecommunications, this most recent wave of high tech. It's hard not to be cynical about universities and high tech. My first full-time teaching job was at Michigan State, and I can remember a faculty meeting in 1953 when the question before the body was whether we would use television as an instructional tool. A very distinguished philosopher, now dead, said, "Of course we're not going to use

television; we've never used radio, and it's superior—you don't have to watch it." How essentially prophetic he was, but I'm hoping that will change. If a group of institutions were to lease the proper amount of satellite time, the same capacity we see utilized on the evening news presumably could be available to our campuses. I think it may be less crucial for the classroom—where I don't expect it to get much use—than for faculty in meeting the urgent need for development and growth in a period when there is going to be less faculty mobility and interchange. That might be absolutely crucial in terms of the future quality of institutions. It's not the kind of thing a single institution can afford to do, but a group of states in collaboration might revolutionize faculty development.

And so I would wish that WICHE would furnish models to go by; furnish leadership, something always in short supply; furnish technical competence; and, finally, furnish a bit of evangelical zeal.

Martha Butt
Vice President
Northwest Area Foundation

I am here representing the Northwest Area Foundation, but I'd like to say that my comments are going to be subjective and reflect mostly observations, experiences, and discussions I've had with educators and others. My comments should not be interpreted as "the philanthropic view."

Since the 1950s the Northwest Area Foundation has approved a number of higher education grants for cooperative activities. The objective behind the grants has been to encourage organizations and institutions to work together in order to improve programs and effect economy. The funded programs have met with varying degrees of success.

Although the foundation has supported cooperative programs in the past, it has never focused specifically on the *process* of cooperation. This year, the foundation made fourteen grants to implement projects involving elementary or secondary schools and colleges. Through work on that foundation-initiated program, I have learned that the grantees and foundation staff know very little about what actually facilitates and ensures successful cooperation. We intend to monitor and evaluate these new projects carefully so that we can better understand the process as well as the product.

For the past two years, through my work at the foundation, I've been a WICHE observer. In 1981 the foundation awarded a two-year grant to the WICHE Graduate Education Project. I recently attended a day-long

meeting of that project's advisory committee. It was exciting for me to witness first-hand the serious give and take that went on at the meeting. I saw the difficulties involved in reaching consensus among education and government representatives from a number of states, each with a different resource and agenda.

Decisions Based on Information

In order for the decision makers to plan wisely for the future, they must have current and accurate information. The WICHE staff can and does gather and disseminate needed facts and figures. This is a service that I would encourage them to continue. They need to work closely with the administrators and the legislators to know what information is needed.

WICHE should disseminate information on successful cooperative programs that it has promoted. One big barrier that I see to cooperation is fear of the unknown. As educators and legislators know more about successful cooperative programs, they are more likely to promote cooperation. Dissemination is also important in avoiding the phenomenon of reinventing the wheel.

Other Roles for WICHE

Subregional activities among WICHE members are appropriate. Cooperative programming necessitates frequent communication and long-distance communication is expensive. The shorter the distance between the partners, the more economical the program. There are subregional differences that make such cooperation more sensible. Finally, outside funding may be more readily available on a subregional basis.

Another major role I see for WICHE is that of convener. Holding meetings for legislators and educators to share information and gain insights regarding the needs of higher education is an extremely important function. Until people trust one another, cooperative programming will not occur. This role gives visibility to the WICHE Commission and its work and provides legitimacy that helps facilitate cooperation.

One area that might be looked into is faculty development. I know there have been some efforts at this, but I would encourage the staff and commission to look further at what might be done. Programs could be developed to retrain and revitalize faculty for new roles both in and outside academe in the 1980s.

During a period of increased competition for private funds, I think it will be important for WICHE to demonstrate continued support from the states and the institutions involved in the compact. WICHE must be able to

defend its existence and its worth. Documentation of programming that has taken place in the region as a result of WICHE's work will be very important.

In summary, WICHE should not try to be all things to all people. It should continue to promote student and faculty exchanges and cooperative graduate and undergraduate program coordination in the region. It should constantly ask difficult questions regarding quality, access, and economy.

The time is ripe for cooperative programs. WICHE should encourage legislators to find ways to reward cooperation among institutions. There will have to be incentives for cooperative programs to be implemented and effective.

I think that WICHE should continue to develop and promote a few carefully selected projects. For now, I believe, the encouragement of regional graduate programs is extremely important. Cooperative planning regarding telecommunications, underprepared students, and business-education links are worth exploring, but should be concentrated on specific activities to gather and disseminate information and not to duplicate what is going on elsewhere.

Ann Mary Dussault
State Representative
Montana

As a legislator (soon to be a county commissioner), I would like to focus on the role I think WICHE might play with policy makers, specifically legislators, in the various states that might be talking about resource sharing.

If you assume that legislators are generalists and do not have collective expertise in higher education, then you further have to assume that we are dependent upon others for our sources of information. We also make decisions very fast and under high pressure. We deal with millions of dollars and thousands of pieces of legislation in a very short period of time. You must not confuse us. The moment you confuse us, we will say "no" because we don't have time to deal with a muddle.

A Prescription for Success

When institutions of higher learning come to a legislature and expect it to resolve their territorial conflicts, they will go away with less than they wanted. If those same institutions of higher learning come to us having settled their hash in their back room before they get into our back room

and if they present us with a reasonable, coordinated plan that takes into consideration the current politics of the day, their chances of succeeding in the legislative sector are much greater.

In one era you might have talked about the need for the quality of higher education and how higher education is going to improve the community, but not today The effective talk is about cooperation, efficiency, planning, and resource sharing. Those are good words for today. We understand those things. They make sense to us. Then, if the information we get from institutions responsible for such things is coordinated, direct, noncontradictory, and if territorialism has been set aside at least for that day, we are much more likely to respond in a positive way.

You can carry that one step further. If the planning and resource sharing that all of us expect in sub-areas of our state and at our state level can be expanded to a regional level, then I think the things you want to happen can happen through your state legislatures. But it takes the involvement of a group like WICHE, which can gather and disseminate information and can also cultivate the climate so that each state is ready to move forward with resource sharing and cooperative planning.

Importance of Timing

In the political system, timing is probably more important than any other single factor. A reality may be that states A, B, and C are ready to move tomorrow; but because something else is going on in state D, you don't want to broach that subject until later. You've got to have a group or an institution that is sensitive to such realities. That is as important a role for WICHE to play as the other things we talked about: the information gathering, the facilitating among institutions.

In the final analysis there are two key elements: (1) disseminating information to policy makers in a coordinated and understandable way and (2) doing it at the right time and the right place. If those things occur in the next ten years, higher education in the West can be changed significantly. I think that's an exciting prospect, and WICHE can play an enormous role.

Audience Discussion

A Summary

The following are the major points brought out during a dialog involving the commentators and the audience.

Are benefits of cooperation marginal or fundamental?

The benefits of cooperation are incremental and savings brought about are marginal as opposed to large scale. Thus, cooperative activity is something that some might wish to disregard or even eliminate. This should not surprise anyone. We grapple with most problems in this way—at the margin. A legislature that appropriates money to support professional students under a WICHE exchange should congratulate itself on the relative economy of that approach as opposed to creating and supporting another professional school.

In the necessary reallocation of resources, there are important, crucial decisions facing each state and the entire region. These are basic, fundamental, and far from marginal. The decisions will have far-reaching effects.

What is the environment that nurtures cooperative action?

There are some shining examples of success in cooperative activity in western higher education; the sharing of veterinary medicine education is one example. What brought these into being? Was it leadership, an overwhelming idea, encouragement or enforcement from the state political structure? There is a need to know more about the dynamics of forces that generate cooperation and the variables that are important in eliciting regional interstate cooperation.

For example, the present discussion probably could not have occurred five years earlier. The need for cooperation seems to permeate the consciousness of education now; it is a function of leadership to figure out how to take advantage of the climate and to build strategies around it.

Can or should cooperation be mandated?

Are states willing to give up some of their autonomy in higher education in order to share resources cooperatively? Cooperation cannot be mandated; it won't work that way. While crisis may spur social and institutional change, this can result in bad behavior as often as in good behavior. What is needed is leadership to elicit cooperative activity in such a manner that the benefit to the individual and institution is understood.

There have been advances with the present voluntary system: international programs to share faculty and facilities; sharing of expensive equipment; group purchasing and insurance; sharing expensive programs such as veterinary education; library exchanges. There are impediments, of course, but leadership can bring about some sacrifices for the common good.

Can WICHE, however, expand its lines of communications sufficiently to the political sector to seek their sanction for insisting on a "rule of

cooperation"? WICHE does not play such a role now, and it is questionable if it should. Rather, it should try to permeate the barriers through commitment and zeal. If this fails, the impetus could shift to the federal government to require coordinated action.

Receptivity of legislative bodies to cooperative activities

The fiscal and political climate is ripe for resource sharing within higher education where it will help state budgets and save states from starting costly programs. Recent adoption of reciprocal tuition legislation in several western states is an example. Legislators perceive there is unnecessary duplication of general programs between two-year and four-year schools. The key will be to demonstrate to legislatures how to improve services without the expense of the traditional method of starting a new program.

Some of these decisions are exclusive within each state. WICHE can assist the states to look at their own structures and educational offerings and then to recognize the availability of programs in neighboring states and across the region.

The role of business and industry in higher education

There is now more involvement of business and industry in cooperative efforts at the local, state, and regional levels, but it is not clear how these liaisons will play out in higher education's future. It seems that as business and industry find their own resources more limited, they are looking at more efficient ways to use research and development dollars. Turning to higher education is one way of doing this.

It should be realized that corporations or their foundations cannot pick up the slack in resources from the public sector. Industry is looking for partnerships that are productive. If they fail to make a profit, businesses will lack the resources to go further with such partnerships.

Location-bound students

A danger of reducing the number of institutions that provide a broad range of educational programs is that the desired balance of expertise, especially at professional levels, will be disrupted since professionals tend to practice in areas where they are educated.

A response to this problem is to utilize innovative mechanisms such as providing a portion of the education and training in various areas, e.g., first-year studies away from the main institution, field experience, or clinical practices in other locales.

WICHE Commissioners

The member states guide WICHE and maintain program oversight through their commissioners, three appointed by the governor of each state. The commission sets policy for the organization and reviews and approves WICHE projects in line with organization goals and state needs.

Alaska
Jay Barton, President, University of Alaska
Kerry Romesburg, Executive Director, Commission on Postsecondary Education
Arliss Sturgulewski, State Senator

Arizona
Robert Huff, Executive Director, Arizona Board of Regents
Russell Nelson, President, Arizona State University
Jones Osborn, State Senator

California
Patrick Callan, Director, California Postsecondary Education Commission
Chester DeVore, former Superintendent/President, Southwestern College District
Richard Hovannisian, Professor of History, University of California at Los Angeles

Colorado
Joanne Arnold, Associate Dean, School of Journalism, University of Colorado at Boulder
Philip Burgess, Professor of Management and Minerals Policy and Director of the Institute for Energy and Minerals Management, Colorado School of Mines
Kathleen Farley, Staff Assistant to U.S. Representative Ray Kogovsek

Hawaii
Charles Akama, Legislative Officer, Hawaii Government Employees Association
David Fairbanks, Attorney
Sumie McCabe, Admissions Specialist, University of Hawaii

Idaho
Beverly Bistline, Attorney
Richard Gibb, President, University of Idaho
Martha Jones, Physician

Montana
Irving Dayton, Commissioner of Higher Education, Board of Regents of Higher Education
William McGregor, Physician
William Thomas, State Senator

Nevada
Patricia Geuder, Associate Professor of English, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Paul Page, Dean, College of Arts and Science, University of Nevada, Reno
John Vergiels, State Assemblyman

New Mexico

Lenton Malry, Bernalillo County Commissioner and Affirmative Action Officer, Albuquerque Public Schools
John Perovich, President, University of New Mexico
Ruben A. Smith, State Representative

Oregon

Georgia Gratke, The Neil Company Realtors
Roy Lieuallen, Chancellor Emeritus, Oregon System of Higher Education
Robert Pamplin, Jr., President, R.B. Pamplin Corp.

Utah

Donald Holbrook, Attorney
Karl Swan, State Senator
Arvo Van Alstyne, Commissioner of Higher Education, Utah System of Higher Education

Washington

Margaret Chisholm, Acting Director, School of Librarianship, University of Washington
Dan McDonald, State Senator
Carl A. Trendler, Executive Coordinator, Council for Postsecondary Education

Wyoming

Francis Barrett, Physician
William Rector, State Senator
Donald Veal, President, University of Wyoming